

## Second Annual P.I.E.R. Conference

BY DANIELLE GRILLO  
Staff Writer

On Aug. 4, the Dr. Susan L. Davis, RN, & Richard J. Henley College of Nursing, in partnership with Nuvance Health, hosted the second annual P.I.E.R. Conference at the Center for Healthcare Education. The event gathered students, faculty, educators, innovators and nursing professionals to connect academic learning with real-world practice and explore today's challenges in the profession.

P.I.E.R. (Partnership, Innovation, Education and Research) is a conference designed to strengthen the future of nursing by uniting academic and clinical communities. The mission is to spark collaboration, encourage new ideas, and connect students with professionals and resources to help them develop as healthcare leaders.

"The conference is a unique opportunity to bring together many different kinds of nurses, faculty from many universities, and practicing nurses all in one place," said Dr. Karen Daley, Dean of the College of Nursing. "It gives [students] a glimpse of what their future could be and shows them the inspiring work people are doing in nursing."

Nuvance Health, an integrated, non-profit healthcare system that recently joined Northwell Health, operates seven hospitals across Connecticut and New York. Through its partnership with Sacred Heart University, the system bridges academia with hands-on experience in healthcare settings.

The keynote speaker of the event was Dr. Marilyn Malerba, the 18th chief of the Mohegan Tribe, who served as the 45th treasurer of the United States from 2022 to 2024. She shared her experiences leading in nursing, federal policy, and tribal health, offering insight into her multifaceted career.

"Her perspective illustrated an unusual and impactful path to leadership for a nurse," said Daley.

Building on its success in last year's inaugural event, one of the main components of the conference was the nursing hackathon. During this, participants worked together to brainstorm creative solutions to complex healthcare challenges. The interactive activity aimed to encourage teamwork, critical thinking and problem-solving beyond the classroom.

"We want these students to be active participants in finding solutions to their problems. They should not wait until they become nurses to find solutions," said Dr. Jasper Tolarba, Endowed Chair for Nursing Practice, Education, Research & Innovation at Nuvance Health and Sacred Heart. "It's always important that while they are still students, they're already talking about these issues."

This year's conference also introduced a panel discussion.



Daniel Passapera, Sacred Heart University

Nursing professionals, educators, researchers, and students gather in the Center for Healthcare Education at Sacred Heart University for the P.I.E.R. conference on Aug. 4, 2025.

The panel united nursing professionals from competing hospitals, highlighting that, at their core, they face similar difficulties and share a common dedication to improving patient care.

"Those are big institutions that normally would not talk to each other, because they are market competitors," said Tolarba. "But in that space, at that moment, we were able to put those nursing leaders in one room and came to find out, we share the same issues, the same values, and the same goals to really help patients in the state."

The conference also allowed students to engage directly with these professionals, building connections that could support future networking and career opportunities. By speaking with nurses from different hospitals, students gained insight into various work environments, helping them consider where to start their careers.

"It gives me a chance to see what a day-to-day would be like instead of just learning textbook things in a classroom," said

junior Jamie Peragallo. "Having that opportunity to see and hear about how different things are out of school gives me a better idea of what to expect when I start working."

"Experiences like this compare to traditional classroom or clinical learning, in terms of preparing you for your future career, because it is a direct look into what you may have to do," said sophomore Madison Campbell.

With the positive feedback from this year's attendees, plans are already underway to continue P.I.E.R. as an annual event. By bringing together students, faculty, and healthcare professionals, the conference has established itself as a meaningful platform for learning, collaboration, and professional growth.

"So many students have their heads down, focusing on the next test and next class. I think this event helps them see the possibilities of future career paths and the variety of places you can go with a nursing degree," said Daley.

## "Jimmy Kimmel Live!" Reinstated

BY ARIANNA GIANNOPOULOS  
Staff Writer

The "Jimmy Kimmel Live!" show was pulled from ABC on Sept. 17, following Kimmel's comments about Charlie Kirk's assassination. He has since returned to air as of Sept. 23. The news of his suspension came two months after Stephen Colbert's late-night show was announced to be ending.

News of Kimmel's suspension sparked discourse online, some arguing that his First Amendment right to free speech was being violated, others supporting his suspension because of the sensitive nature of Kirk's death. His comments came less than one week after Kirk was killed.

"We hit some new lows over the weekend with the MAGA Gang desperately trying to characterize this kid who murdered Charlie Kirk as anything other than one of them and doing everything they can to score political points from it," said Kimmel, in his statement on the show that led to his suspension.

According to the Associated Press, Kimmel referred to Kirk's killing as a "senseless murder" and condemned those who celebrated it.

ABC initially did not provide a reasoning for his suspension but released a statement on Sept. 22.

"We made the decision to suspend production on the show to avoid further inflaming a tense situation at an emotional moment for our country. It is a decision we made because we felt some of the comments were ill-timed and thus insensitive," said the Walt Disney Co., which owns ABC.

Kimmel opened his first show back from suspension by thanking fellow late-night hosts and public figures who showed their support. Candace Owens, James Corden and Jimmy Fallon are a few among the public figures that voiced support for him. Kimmel also shared a clip from Texas Republican Senator Ted Cruz's podcast, "Verdict With Ted Cruz" on his first episode back. On the podcast, Ted Cruz stated that he doesn't like Kimmel, but agreed that he shouldn't have been taken off air. He doesn't agree with the government taking shows off air for using their freedom of speech.

"I have no illusions about changing anyone's mind, but I do want to make something clear, because it's important to me as a human and that is, you understand that it was never my intention to make light of the murder of a young man," said Kimmel. "I don't think there's anything funny about it."

As for the SHU community, this news hasn't gone unnoticed. Prof. Joseph Alicastro, SCMA professor, has spent over 30 years working as a news producer for NBC.

As for whether Kimmel's suspension was an act of cancel culture, Alicastro said, "There is no question that Disney, ABC, Nexstar and Sinclair were responding to aggressive pressure coming from the administration and FCC Chair Brendan Carr."

Nexstar and Sinclair are companies that own 20 percent of the broadcast stations that air Kimmel's late-night show, and chose not to air his return episode, according to Alicastro.

"I think that the decision to suspend and return the show was probably the right decision from a corporate standpoint and perhaps was successful in cooling down the controversy and addressing it in context as Kimmel did in his .....

See "Jimmy Kimmel Live!" Reinstated  
continued on pg. 2

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HOCKEY RANKED FIRST  
IN PRESEASON POLL

# News

## Laudato Si' Initiative Expands to Office

BY MADELEINE MEDEIROS  
Asst. News Editor



Courtesy of the Sacred Heart University Website

Fr. Emiel Abalahin, right, blesses one of the Laudato Si' Contemplative Gardens at Sacred Heart University's West Campus.

The establishment of the Laudato Si' Office of Sustainability and Social Justice (LSOSSJ) was announced on Sept. 11 after SHU joined the initiative in 2022.

For Dr. Chelsea King, LSOSSJ director and professor of Catholic studies, becoming an office not only gives the work more visibility, but helps promote themes of sustainability and social justice into the Sacred Heart culture.

"It allows us to work across all divisions—academic departments, student life, operations and mission—ensuring that care for creation and social responsibility are woven into every part of campus life," King said.

"We are working hard to create positive change for the university and the planet," said Dr. Todd Matthews, professor of sociology, criminology and criminal justice—and, most recently, a member of the newly-established Laudato Si' advisory board.

The Feb. 15, 2022, SHU Newsroom post announced that President Dr. John J. Petillo signed a commitment to participate in the Laudato Si' Platform, started by the late Pope Francis in 2021. According to the SHU Newsroom post from 2022, Pope Francis' call to action includes seven goals: a response to the poor, to the earth, ecological economics, adoption of sustainable lifestyles, ecological education, ecological spirituality and community empowerment. Since then, the mission has remained the same but evolved in scope.

The office is currently partnering with Chartwells, the university's dining vendor, among other organizations. For example, the introduction of the reusable green OZZI containers available to students in dining halls was one sustainability initiative made possible through stakeholder conversations, according to King.

Beyond that, King said the Earth Week celebration, which hosted sustainable vendors, workshops, art installations and other initiatives spanning wellness and education represent the growth of the movement at SHU.

"It's becoming a lived reality that shapes the culture of the university," said King. The programs are meant to connect learning, reflection and action, "helping students see how sustainability and justice are integral to their



Courtesy of the Sacred Heart University Website

Diane Barnett of Grounded Meditation hosted a meditative sound session on the chapel quad, featuring crystals and Himalayan bowls, chimes, gongs, and other instruments.

education and formation."

However, sophomore biology major Maria Clara Bragagnolo Rose said, "I hope they're going to carry out more campuswide initiatives [now that Laudato Si' is an office] and information sessions to bring the community together to care about something."

"As a school as a whole we have initiatives that focus on sustainability, but we are not doing enough as a student body," said Rose.

Dr. Todd Matthews is a sociologist and organizational scholar with experience in research and the overlap of environmental and social issues.

"I am one of the primary researchers involved with creating and implementing the SHU Poll, which is a nationally-representative survey that is run in partnership with the LSOSSJ initiative," Matthews said.

According to the LSOSSJ "Research and Initiatives" page on the Sacred Heart website, the office is continuing the initiative between the university and GreatBlue Research partner. The most recent poll project listed is the "National Poll on United States Youth on Sustainability, Social Justice, Climate Change and the Role of Higher Education" from September 2024. This poll surveyed a random sample of 2,000 U.S. residents between the ages of 15 and 29 and found that nearly three in four U.S. youth worry about climate change, among other findings, according to the official report.

Students are central to the work of the Laudato Si' office.

"They serve on committees, help plan events, lead wellness initiatives, and participate in research projects," said King.

Interested students can get involved via the SHU Environmental Club or by volunteering at events. Upcoming events include "Wellness Walks" every Thursday at 12:15 p.m., and the "Letting Go with Sound Healing" event Oct. 7 at 2 p.m. on Chapel Quad.

"Catholic Intellectual Tradition and Catholic Social Teaching make this an initiative of critical importance for the university," said Matthews. "It really inspires us to be better in stewardship of the planet and in support of the human dignity of every person."

## "Jimmy Kimmel Live!" Reinstated

BY ARIANNA GIANNOPOULOS  
Staff Writer

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return Tuesday night," said Alicastro.

"I see the entire episode involving the cancellation of Kimmel's show and Colbert's show as payback against liberal Democrats, who for several years have done their very best to cancel the views and values of conservatives," said Dr. Gary Rose, Scholar in Residence at SHU.

Rose noted that the initial suspension of Kimmel's show was "considered by his audience as government censorship, which in some respects it appeared to be."

Moreover, Rose mentioned the pressure from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC).

"[ABC] made the right decision because of the ratings, which is the company's prerogative, but the way in which the FCC was involved and with President Trump encouraging censorship was flat wrong," said Rose.

On the other hand, FCC Chairman Brendan Carr said that Kimmel's comments about Kirk's accused killer misrepresented his political beliefs, as they are still unclear, according to the Associated Press.

Junior Maddy Jones watches Kimmel's show nearly every week, however she disagreed with his comments.

"I think that it was completely inappropriate timing and that politicians who have passed away are not appropriate to be a part of comedy. Jimmy Kimmel's skits are all supposed to be comedic, and obviously not everyone found it funny. That's why it resulted in his show being canceled," said Jones.

*The Associated Press contributed to this article.*



Randy Holmes, AP Photo

Jimmy Kimmel hosting his late night show "Jimmy Kimmel Live!" in Los Angeles on Tuesday, Sept. 23, 2025.

# Features

## PRSSA Prepares Students for Real-World Success

BY MACKENZIE FLYNN  
Staff Writer

Media outreach, social media engagement and brand development are just a few of the workshops offered by the national professional society, Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA).

PRSSA chapters exist all over the country, providing students with hands-on experience and vital connections in the public relations field. Specifically at Sacred Heart University, PRSSA works to help organizations spread their message.

“We work with on-campus and off-campus clubs to help with different needs and opportunities,” said faculty advisor Dr. Mark Congdon.

Last semester, in November 2024, Congdon won a Global Service-Learning Award for the United Hearts Initiative and received extensive resources, which he invested back into the program, making more opportunities available to members.

Also continuing this year is a program called Heart Fusion, a student-run public relations agency led by Congdon. Both Heart Fusion and PRSSA hold workshops to set students up for success when looking for full-time jobs or internships.

“This is what is going to help you land that job or internship,” said Congdon.

While it is open to any student of any major, events are for members only. Public relations majors may be the most inclined, but PRSSA can benefit students going into numerous fields.

“I think that it’s not the first thing criminal justice majors think about joining, but they could definitely benefit from it,” said sophomore Melia Campbell. “You don’t even think about this kind of stuff as a non-public relations major until it is presented to you.”

Public relations plays a role in many different occupations, and students are encouraged to investigate how PRSSA can best serve them.

“Report writing is when we document our findings and provide professional forensic reports, similar to how someone in PR might write a press release, so I could use some help on my professional report writing skills,” said Campbell.

Meetings are bi-monthly and held both online and in-person, so they are accessible to everyone.

“While I personally dedicate most of my time to my nursing courses and Student Nurses Association, I think that for other nursing majors who are interested in advocating for public health and spreading awareness about their field, this would be a great opportunity for them,” said sophomore nursing student Francesca Sferlazza.

Members of PRSSA can benefit from gaining access to job postings and opportunities.

“Students have access to a job board where companies will post jobs and internships that prioritize students involved in this well-known society,” said Congdon.

Graduate students in the Master’s in Strategic Communications and Public Relations



Contributed by: Mark Congdon, Faculty Advisor of SHU PRSSA Chapter

### SHU PRSSA Group partaking in the Heart Fusion Launch event in April 2025.

program are granted automatic membership, with annual reapplication applying to everyone.

“The fee to join is \$55 annually, but like I always say, ‘the more you are involved, the more you get out of it,’” said Congdon.

For students like junior Grace Anderson, a Strategic Communications, Public Relations and Advertising major, PRSSA connects directly to her studies and correlates with what she learns in her courses.

“I’ve only heard good things about the program, and I think it would be helpful with connecting what I’ve learned in class to internships and jobs,” said Anderson.

Mentoring opportunities and scholarships provided by PRSSA exist to help students utilize their existing skills in a way that invests in their future.

“I would like to improve on my analysis skills when it comes to campaigns and media, and I know a lot of people who are PR and advertising majors that are looking for something just like this to make good connections,” said Anderson.

You can stop by PRSSA booths during their table times or visit their Instagram @sacredheart\_prssa to learn more or express interest.

## The Big Move

BY NICHOLAS MAISANO  
Staff Writer

Students have the option to live off-campus during their junior and senior years of college, offering them more independence and bringing them one step closer to adulthood.

While Sacred Heart University owns three properties located within a mile of the main campus, many students prefer to rent homes or apartments privately.

“Students who are looking to rent privately can work with local real estate agents, contact landlords directly, or use any online search tools,” said Emily Grobmyer, Director of Residential Life for Operations.

“We also are partnered with JumpOffCampus.com where landlords in the area can post rentals,” said Grobmyer.

This is a website that serves as a central place for students to find off-campus housing.

Junior Ryan Buchan found his house through upperclassmen friends and lives with four other people.

“I am a few blocks down in Bridgeport, less than two minutes away from campus,” said Buchan.



Katelyn Toth, Staff Writer and Photographer

Pioneer Gardens is an off-campus housing option for upperclassmen located at 51 Eckart St, Bridgeport, CT 06606.

Junior Kylie Quercia rents a house in Bridgeport.

“Living off campus has given me the opportunity to enjoy more freedom and independence, especially since I get to share the experience with my best friends,” said Quercia.

When asked about her involvement on campus, Quercia said she still feels very involved despite not living in a dorm anymore.

“I am part of the dance program, which brings me back to campus twice a week, and I am also very connected to the nursing community,” said Quercia. “These activities make me feel just as engaged as when I lived

on campus.”

“I still feel very involved even while living off campus,” said Buchan. “That was a fear of mine, but it has since subsided and has been no issue.”

Junior Sophia Fromson lives in an off-campus apartment in Bridgeport that is about a five-minute drive from campus. While she enjoys the independence that comes with living in an apartment, she encounters some difficulties too.

“Getting to campus for class by car and parking is something that I now have to worry about,” said Fromson. “I like having the freedom to have a car and drive to class, but I do miss living on campus.”

Despite having his own kitchen, Buchan said he took on a meal plan with both meal swipes and dining dollars because of how often he is on campus.

“The meal plan has been fine so far, but I still find myself buying groceries for weekends and nighttime snacks,” said Buchan.

Finances are a big factor for students to consider when deciding where they want to live. Renting privately comes with “hidden costs,” such as utilities, cable, gas and groceries. Buchan explained that living off campus has made him more mindful of the money he spends.

“We encourage any student who is thinking about renting privately for their junior/senior year to talk with their financial aid counselor regarding how that decision could impact their financial aid package and whether living off campus is affordable for them,” said Grobmyer.

Quercia, Buchan and Fromson all said they searched for private rentals in late September into early October of their sophomore years.

“This helped my friends and I avoid the stress of trying to find housing in the middle of a semester,” said Quercia.

The Office of Residential Life can work with students who may have trouble with their private rentals later in the process as well.

“If a student’s private rental falls through after the housing selection process concludes, we will work with them to try to accommodate them in SHU junior/senior housing; however, we can only do so if housing is available,” said Grobmyer.

Information and resources for living off campus can be found on sacredheart.edu by searching “Off-Campus Housing Resources.”

**UPCOMING  
EVENTS ON  
CAMPUS**

**FRIDAY 10/3:  
A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S  
DREAM  
7 P.M. AT THE BLACK  
BOX THEATRE**

**SATURDAY 10/4:  
FALL FLEA MARKET  
12 P.M. AT 63'S PATIO  
LAWN**

**SATURDAY 10/4:  
HARRY POTTER  
WATCH PARTY  
6 P.M. AT UPPER QUAD**

# CampusLife

## Fall Festivities at SHU

BY LAUREN RAUSO  
Staff Writer

On Sunday, Oct. 5, the First Year Programs is hosting a trip to Salem, Massachusetts, as a way to welcome the Halloween season. The booking window has closed for this event on Sept 13.

Ticket prices for this event costed \$20, and those who are attending will be picked up the university’s provided transportation at 8 am and are expected to arrive back on campus at 8 pm.

Students will have the opportunity to explore the history of the Salem Witch Trials, along with experiencing the spooky downtown and its correlating shops.

Many students across campus who are not attending the Salem trip have fall outings and trips planned of their own for this season with friends and family, both here at SHU and at home.

“This fall, my friends and I are going to see the animals and go pumpkin picking at Silverman’s Farm in Easton, about 10 minutes away from campus. It is a great way to give ourselves a break from schoolwork and get off campus,” said junior Ashlyn Evans.

Fairfield County offers a great variety of fall activities ranging from pumpkin picking, apple picking, haunted hayrides and mazes, and farmer’s markets for everyone to enjoy.

“I’m looking forward to attending the Westport Farmers Market and seeing all of the different vendors that they have to offer, along with picking out fresh fruit and flowers,” said junior Angelica Esposito.

While some students are staying local for their fall activities, others are using this fall season to see more of what the world has to offer.

“My family and I are going to be in Italy with extended family over Thanksgiving break, and while we are there, I am looking forward to exploring the Ferrari Museum, which is located in Maranello,” said junior Will Luceno.

“I am excited to check off a bucket list vacation that I have always wanted to take with my family. We are going to the Canadian side of the Niagara Falls to explore the falls and try new restaurants in the area,” said junior Matthew Blanco.

To explore more about what SHU first-year programs have to offer throughout the semester, visit their Instagram @shufirst-yearprograms.

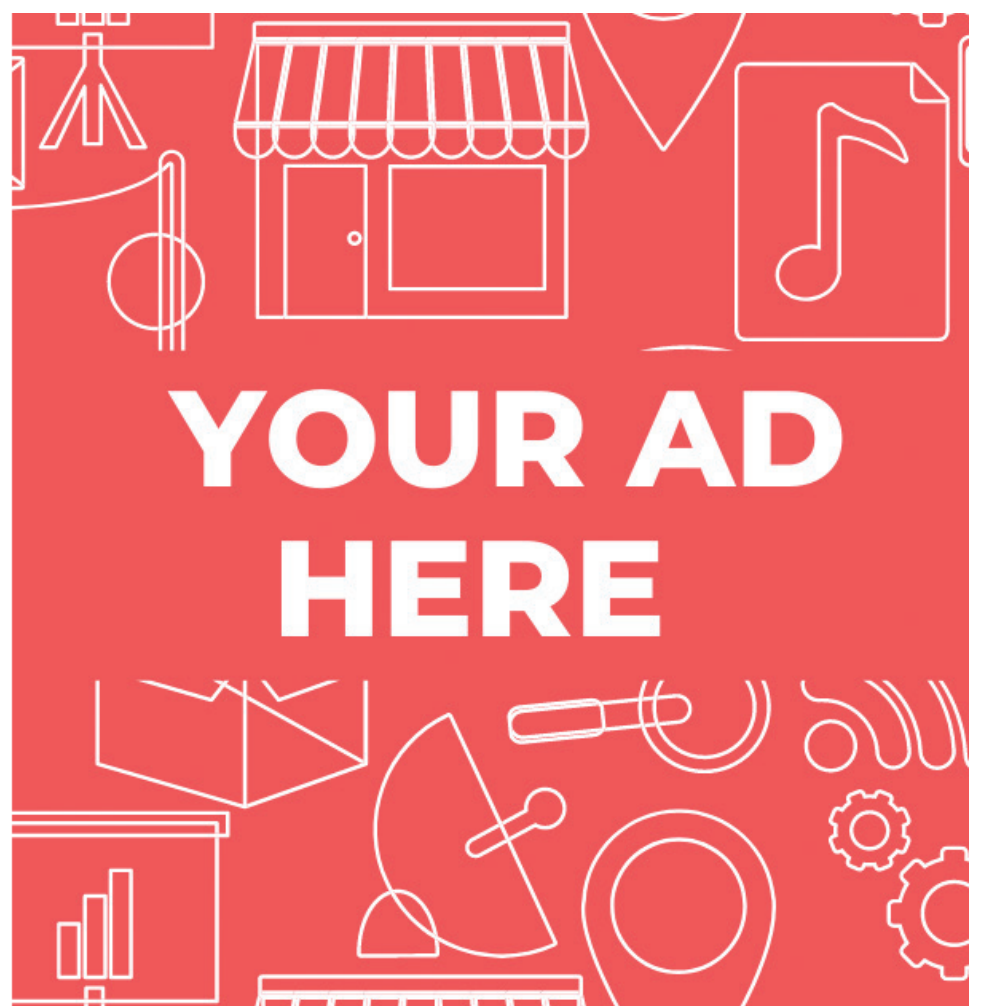


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# CampusLife

## Falling into Autumn

BY DECLAN TOLAND  
Staff Writer

Sacred Heart University (SHU) students are welcoming the fall season with music, movies, and seasonal treats that reflect the spirit of autumn. The cooler weather has inspired many students to update their playlists, snuggle up with their favorite shows, and engage in seasonal activities.

Junior Jack Cote shared that his music preferences change with the seasons.

“Music that I listen to in the fall varies, but I tend to lean toward indie folk artists like Mumford & Sons, Gregory Alan Isakov, and the Lumineers,” said Cote.

Cote also enjoys revisiting movies and shows that feel very autumnal.

“I always rewatch “Knives Out” come fall time, and anything Snoopy-related,” said Cote.

When it comes to food, Cote has a clear favorite.

“I love an apple cider donut with coffee,” said Cote.

For him, fall is also a time to enjoy the outdoors.

“My favorite fall activity would have to be going for a run on a trail when the leaves begin to change.”

Junior, Katherine Luther, has her own set of fall preferences.

“My go-to fall music is usually anything by The Neighborhood, while I’ve also been listening to the album Immunity by Clairo a lot,” said Luther.

Her favorite fall television is a staple for Luther.

“‘Gilmore Girls’ is an easy answer. It’s the ultimate fall show, and nothing beats it,” said Luther.

Luther and her roommates have been exploring fall-inspired recipes, bringing a cozy atmosphere to their apartments.

“Recently, my roommates and I have enjoyed trying new fall recipes, like apple crisp and banana chocolate chip muffins. Trader Joe’s also has a lot of solid fall snacks,” said Luther.

When it comes to seasonal activities, Luther loves traditional fall pleasures that get her in the autumn spirit.

“I’m a big fan of carving pumpkins once it gets closer to October and drinking iced pumpkin chai from Starbucks,” said Luther.

From relaxing with favorite shows and seasonal foods to exploring the outdoors and listening to music that matches the autumn vibe, SHU students are getting creative in their ways to celebrate the upcoming fall season.

For a deeper dive into the fall music students are turning to this semester, be sure to check out the SHU fall roundup playlist on the new official Spectrum Spotify profile.



BY THEO WEISMANN  
Campus Life Editor

“Bloom” - Paper Kites

“Psycho Killer” - Talking Heads

“Pool House” - Backseat Lovers

“Juna” - Clairo

“Amsterdam” - Gregory Alan Isakov

“1979” - The Smashing Pumpkins

“Sweater Weather” - Ther Neighbourhood

“Punkrock” - Teddybears, Iggy Pop

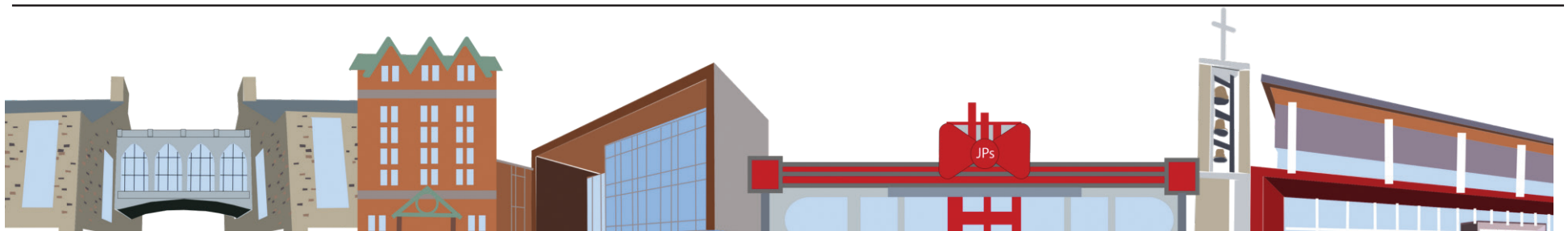
“Werewolves of London” - Warren Zevon

“Stick Season” - Noah Kahan

“Apocalypse” - Cigarettes After Sex

“505” - Arctic Monkeys

**AND SO MUCH MORE!**



Interested in contributing to Campus Life? Contact us at [spectrum@sacredheart.edu](mailto:spectrum@sacredheart.edu)

# Arts & Entertainment

## TAP Presents “A Midsummer Night’s Dream”

BY EMMA RICOTTA

Arts & Entertainment Editor

The Theatre Arts Program (TAP) at Sacred Heart University is performing “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” by William Shakespeare from Sept. 26 to Oct. 12 in the Black Box Theatre.

This play follows the four lovers Hermia, Lysander, Helena and Demetrius, who travel through a magical forest where they find a mischievous fairy, Puck, who uses love potions to create romantic chaos.

The director of the play held auditions while the Justin Zenchuk, Director of Theatre Arts, emailed the selected students and their corresponding parts subsequent to the audition. Sophomore Brigid Gawley, who plays Helena, thoroughly enjoyed the whole audition process.

“It was a super comfortable place to be in,” said Gawley. “Everyone was there to support you and wants you to succeed.”

Prior to the audition, the students were sent script sides for them to review. They then read the sides for their audition and the director would give them feedback.

Junior William Heidelberger was ecstatic when he found out that TAP was doing “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” and that he received the role of Cobweb.

“Going into auditions, I really wanted one of the forest characters because I thought they’d be super fun to play,” said Heidelberger. “However, I really desired just to be in the show because I love performing Shakespeare.”

In the play, Cobweb is one of the four fairies that attend to Bottom for Queen Titania. The fairies serve Bottom because the Queen falls in love with him under the influence of a magical potion.

Gawley also felt grateful and honored for receiving her role as Helena.

“When I got Helena, I was super excited because when I read her monologue for the audition, I really did feel how she was feeling in that moment,” said Gawley. “She has a lot of powerful words to say and a lot of powerful feelings that everyone does feel at some point in time.”

Helena is a determined and passionate character. She is a young woman in love with the character Demetrius. Demetrius rejected Helena’s love, which made her follow him into the forest in hopes to win him back. Because of the fairy’s love potion, Demetrius falls in love with Helena.

The cast of “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” have been in the rehearsal process prior to opening night and tech rehearsals. Depending on what part they have, they rehearse a couple times a week. During tech week, they rehearse everyday.

“Rehearsals have been super fun,” said Heidelberger. “I love the director as well as everyone on the creative team.”



Contributed by: Justin Zenchuk, Director of Theatre Arts Program

Sacred Heart Theatre Arts students in Edinburgh for their Fringe Festival debut of Scenes from the opening weekend production of “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” River.

The TAP and the play’s cast members encourage students to watch and support.

“Even though Shakespeare might be intimidating, I really do think that the actors help the audience understand it,” said Gawley. “It’s also a super funny comedy with a lot of talented people in it.”

The show will be running three times throughout the weekends of Oct. 3 and Oct. 11. The opening weekend of “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” was during Family weekend on campus where they sold out the theatre. Tickets are \$5 for Sacred Heart University students.

For more information on “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” and where to buy tickets, go to <https://edgertoncenter.org/events/a-midsummers-nights-dream/>.

## Team Conrad V.S. Team Jeremiah

BY KATELYN TOTH

Staff Writer

**SPOILER ALERT:** The finale from one of Amazon Prime Video’s biggest hit series, “The Summer I Turned Pretty,” was released on Wednesday, Sept. 17. Following the concluding episode of the popular three-season run, Prime Video then announced “The Summer I Turned Pretty” movie at the red-carpet celebration in Paris, France.

The series is based on the novel trilogy by author Jenny Han that includes “The Summer I Turned Pretty,” “It’s Not Summer Without You” and “We’ll Always Have Summer.” It explores the main character Belly’s relationships with her childhood friends, Conrad and Jeremiah Fisher. In their summer home at Cousins Beach, a love triangle erupts between Belly and the two brothers.

Season three sent avid audiences navigating through Belly’s life post-wedding cancellation to younger brother Jeremiah. She created a new independent life in Paris, but ultimately realized her true love has always been with older brother Conrad.

This third and final season premiered on July 16, with a new episode releasing every Wednesday for 11 weeks. Senior Molly McManus followed Belly’s journey and was eager for each episode to air.

“The season brought nostalgia and excitement, and I felt like every episode was left on a cliff hanger,” said McManus. “This season, all the parallels between the previous and current ones really stuck out to me.”

Throughout the episodes, Han embedded hints to foreshadow that Belly would end up with Conrad. From photo collages of Conrad near Belly’s bed, to the infinity sign as a symbol of Conrad’s love, these hints made viewers excited to see what happened next.

A lot of these hints were also shown through the soundtrack. Sophomore Alexandra Verzes found that the music throughout the season is what stood out to her the most.

“I loved the song selections for certain scenes,” said Verzes. “I feel like this season was more focused on becoming as popular as possible and the music definitely helped that.”

One artist dominated the soundtrack with 29 songs featured. Taylor Swift’s music was continually used throughout the seasons to highlight the ever-changing love story.

“The song ‘Red’ by Taylor Swift played in the trailer for the third season,” said junior Christa Spiliotis. “I really felt like it symbolized the characters’ emotional journeys.”

With the popularity of the series, fans enjoyed choosing between the brothers and identifying themselves on “Team Conrad” or “Team Jeremiah.”

“I am definitely on Team Conrad,” said Verzes. “My side has been the same since

the beginning, but I did read the books prior to watching the shows, so I had an idea of who Belly was meant to end up with.”

Most people choose Conrad’s team because of how the character is selfless and innocent toward his love for Belly.

“Throughout the season, I saw how much Conrad did for Belly because he was so in love,” said McManus. “Team Conrad all the way!”

Viewers are shocked and enthusiastic that a movie has been announced, as they thought that the third season was the finale. With all of the media attention the series has got, the overall storyline has become even more interesting and intriguing.

“I am super excited for the movie,” said McManus. “I am a person who gets emotionally involved in TV shows and movies, so this will be no different.”

With the third season following Han’s third book, audiences are left guessing what the new film will include.

“I have no idea what we will be seeing in the movie,” said Verzes. “But, I am so excited.”



Instagram, @thesummerturnedpretty

Lola Tung and Christopher Briney pose for a photo during the announcement of “The Summer I Turned Pretty” movie.

# Sports

## Sacred Heart Hockey Ranked First in Preseason Polls

BY NICHOLAS DILAPI  
Staff Writer

The men's and women's ice hockey teams were both ranked number one in their respective Preseason Coaches' Polls.

Last season, the women's team won the New England Women's Hockey Alliance (NEWHA) conference, defeating Long Island University 4-2 in the championship game.

"We got stronger as the season went along, ultimately playing our best hockey in March," said women's ice hockey head coach Thomas O'Malley.

O'Malley is entering his 23rd season at the helm and led the program to their first appearance in the NCAA tournament last season.

Despite coming off a stellar season, O'Malley has made sure his team knows that they need to work to get back to the spot they were just in last season.

"It's a new year, and it's a new journey. Let's make it our journey. Let's



Jack Caviuchi, Senior Photo Editor and Assistant Sports Editor

Sophomore Lake Bethard in a huddle during practice on Sept. 19, 2025.

make it our year," said O'Malley.

The team has talent from across the country, including senior and co-captain Olivia LaRoche. The Minnesota native feels that a major part of the team's success last year was the family culture that everyone shared.

"Playing for the person beside us in the locker room and for our graduating seniors too," said LaRoche. "We all just kind of bought in."

LaRoche, who led the team with 11 assists, believes the culture allows for everyone to embrace and support each other's performances on the ice.

"It doesn't matter who scores at the end of the day, we're all happy for each other," said LaRoche.

Junior forward Isabella Chaput, who led the Pioneer's with 14 goals last season, said the team's new year mentality is to get another ring and banner to the rink. However, the team isn't letting themselves think too far ahead.

"We got to come out, play hard, play our game, and just take it day by day," said Chaput. "Just get better every day, and it'll all work out in the end for us."

The women's ice hockey team begins their season on Friday, Oct. 3 at 5 p.m. against Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.

The men's ice hockey team did not find as much postseason success, as they fell to Bentley University in a three-game series during the Atlantic Hockey America (AHA) Semifinals.

"As good as the year was, we fell short, but our guys are fueled by that loss," said head coach C.J. Marottolo. "They learned a lot about handling the momentum swings of a game."

Despite this, the Pioneers were voted first in the 2025-26 preseason conference polls for the second consecutive season.

"Stay the course. Focus on your next shift, not what happened on the last shift," said Marottolo.

The team is trying to stay focused on themselves, taking things day by day, and not letting the outside noise impact their play or their mindsets. Marottolo believes that in order to take the next step, the team has to connect with one another.

"Everybody on this roster has the same goal, and that is to bring an Atlantic Conference Championship here to Sacred Heart."

The men's ice hockey team kicks off their season with an away series at Rochester Institute of Technology on Friday Oct. 10 and Saturday Oct. 11.

*Athletic Communications contributed to this article*

## Women's Rugby Midseason Push

BY ANDREW RABER  
Staff Writer

The women's rugby team has started their 2025 season with two wins, two losses and one tie.

The Pioneers took a 45-21 win against Brown University and a 91-0 win over Queens University of Charlotte in Emmitsburg, Maryland, where they also tied with Mount St. Mary's. Their most recent matches were two losses, 43-7 at American International College (AIC), and a 43-29 at their home opener to Dartmouth.

However, only three games apply to their rankings in the National Intercollegiate Rugby Association (NIRA). The games against Mount St. Mary's and AIC do not apply to their record, as they were cross-divisional matches in which SHU played their B-side. In conference matches, the women are 2-1.

"Only our A-side, or our varsity team, did those results count towards the association's power rankings," said head coach Michelle Reed.

On Saturday, Sept. 20, in the Pioneer's match against Dartmouth, the women said the final score doesn't necessarily tell the whole story.

"In this last Dartmouth game, we played really well in the first half, but then in the second half we just lost our momentum," said junior Reese Torticilli.

"Even though the score was 43-29, it was really a one score game for 77 minutes," said Reed.

Looking ahead, the women have four matches left, two at home and two on the road, before the NIRA playoffs. At the halfway point of their season, the women reflected on their team expectations that have not changed since their first match. They are focused on the student-athletes as people, not just their results as a rugby team.

"Our mission, every season, is to make an environment that makes us feel good, that we get better, we improve one percent every day," said Reed.

These expectations translates down to the players as well.

"Our goal is to continue to get better, and really just to grow. I think that's been the goal throughout the last few years because we've seen such a growth of rugby getting better at SHU. Putting ourselves on the map and showing people we can compete with those high level teams," said junior Olivia Woods. "Not just compete, but we can win against them as well."

The players and coaches make it a point that they are a tight-knit group, and put focus and care into their culture.

"We talk a lot about team culture and what that looks like for us, and then we build off of that," said Woods. "When you're playing 80 minutes of a high stress game, there's a lot going on, and mistakes are going to happen. So when things go wrong, how do we come back to our culture? How do we come together and succeed in those moments?"

The Pioneers will take on Army at home for their senior day game on Oct. 3 for their next matchup.

*Athletic Communications contributed to this article.*



Contributed by Reese Torticilli, '27

Members of the women's rugby team warm up before their match against Dartmouth on Sept. 20, 2025.

# Editorial

## *From the Heart, into Action*

BY CHNOA-NADINE MANSO-VARGAS

*Guest Contributor/Office of Community Engagement Graduate Assistant*

Today, Oct. 1, marks the debut of “Hearts in Action”, a brand-new podcast from Sacred Heart University’s Office of Community Engagement (OCE). The series kicks off with an inaugural episode featuring none other than SHU’s president, Dr. John Petillo, and is now streaming on YouTube (@WHRTVSHU).

At its core, Hearts in Action is about celebrating the power of people and the impact of community. Designed to spotlight meaningful stories and journeys, the podcast shines a light on the individuals, whether students, faculty, staff, alumni, partners, whose everyday efforts embody SHU’s spirit of service and compassion.

The first episode sets the tone by beginning with a story close to home: Dr. Petillo’s own journey with Sacred Heart. He recalls joining SHU years ago as a member of the board, when the university was “a much different school,” one without residence halls or the vibrant campus culture it now enjoys. Reflecting on that time, he laughs that becoming president was “the best decision I never made,” a twist of fate that has shaped not just his career, but the direction of SHU as a whole.

When asked what has kept him passionate about Sacred Heart over the years after being vetted for the presidential role, his answer came quickly: the people.

“What kept me interested was definitely the community and the students, the culture we’ve been able to develop,” Petillo said. “It’s far different than most other colleges, in terms of engagement and presence.”

That culture of care is exactly what the podcast’s name reflects. For Petillo, the phrase “Hearts in Action” speaks directly to SHU’s identity.

“It’s about community engagement. It speaks to the heart of who we are, how we care for each other, and how we share the stories of the unsung heroes in our community,” he explained.

With each new episode, “Hearts in Action” will provide a platform to amplify those voices. Whether it’s a student leader inspiring peers, a faculty member mentoring through service, or alumni making change in their fields. The series creates space for reflection and connection, reminding listeners that even small acts of service and leadership ripple outward in powerful ways.

Recorded in SHU’s state-of-the-art podcasting suites in the Martire Business and Communications Center, the series will feature a wide range of guests and perspectives. Listeners can expect stories of perseverance, lessons learned, and insights into what it means to live with compassion and purpose in today’s world.

The choice to launch with Dr. Petillo underscores the heart of the project: recognizing the people who help shape Sacred Heart’s identity and carry its mission forward. By weaving together personal stories with larger themes of engagement, the podcast not only strengthens bonds within the SHU community but also extends its reach beyond campus.

Hearts in Action is more than a podcast, it’s a celebration of SHU’s commitment to service, leadership, and storytelling. By shining a light on the everyday efforts that often go unnoticed, the series honors the heart-driven work that defines Sacred Heart University and inspires others to do the same.

Follow @shu\_service on Instagram for more information on the Office of Community Engagement and to find promos for the podcast!



Photos contributed by Chnoa-Nadine Manso-Vargas.

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*Letters to the editor should not exceed 700 words and should be emailed to [spectrum@sacredheart.edu](mailto:spectrum@sacredheart.edu). The Spectrum does not assume copyright for any published material. We are not responsible for the opinions of the writers voiced in this forum.*



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